

REMARKS

In the January 5, 2005 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1-13 were pending in the application and were rejected under the first paragraph of 35 USC § 112 and under 35 USC § 103(a). In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patents 5,440,624 to Schoof, II; 5,070,470 to Scully et al.; 5,237,499 to Garback; 6,151,575 to Newman et al.; 6,393,460 to Gruen et al.; and 6,154,764 to Nitta et al. (References A-F, respectively) were cited. Claims 1-13 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

In the last two paragraphs on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-13 under the first paragraph of 35 USC § 112 because the Examiner was unable to parse the English words properly. To overcome the rejection of claim 1, "said judgment unit" has been added prior to "judging" as discussed during the telephonic Examiner Interview on February 24, 2005. A similar change has been made to claim 9 and the word "for" has been added prior to "judging" in claim 13. However, there is no "and" following the term "judgment unit" in claim 10 and there is no "judgment unit" recited in claims 11 and 12. As a result, it is unclear how these claims could be amended to overcome the rejection under the first paragraph of 35 USC § 112.

If the February 24, 2005 telephonic Examiner Interview was insufficient to enable the Examiner to properly parse the English words in claims 10-12, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone to arrange another Examiner Interview for the purpose of discussing what amendments are required to these claims. Withdrawal of the rejection, at least with respect to claims 1-9 and 13, is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 USC § 103(a)

On pages 3-12 all of the claims were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) over the same combinations of references and using almost identical language as used in the March 15, 2004 Office Action. Since the Examiner did not find the differences between the present invention and the prior art discussed in the Amendment filed June 15, 2004 and received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on June 18, 2004 to be sufficient to allow the claims, the independent claims have been amended to further clarify these differences. As discussed in the Amendment filed June 15, 2004, the system disclosed by Schoof, II does not disclose calculation of "an index indicating an amount of the information stored about the discussion" (e.g., claim 1, lines 3-4). Furthermore, no suggestion has been cited or found in any of the prior art used in rejecting the claims of "comparing the index with a specific value" (e.g., claim 1, last line) to

determine "whether to hold a face-to-face conference" (e.g., claim 1, line 4). Since similar limitations are recited in claims 9 and 11-13, it is submitted that these claims and claims 2-8 which depend from claim 1 patentably distinguish over the prior art for at least the reasons discussed above and in the June 15, 2005 Amendment.

Claim 10 recites "comparing an indication of an amount of the stored information about the discussion with a specific value" (claim 10, last two lines) in determining "whether to hold a face-to-face conference" (claim 10, line 7). Thus, it is submitted that claim 10 patentably distinguishes over the prior art for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Entry of Amendment

As discussed above, amendments have been made to claims 1 and 9 in accordance with the telephonic Examiner Interview on February 24, 2005. Assuming that the Examiner still agrees that these changes are sufficient to meet the requirements of 35 USC § 112, first paragraph, , the number of issues for appeal have been reduced by these changes.

Since claims 5 -8 previously recited various ways in which a specific value can be used in determining whether to hold a face-to-face conference, the other amendments made to the independent claims should not require an additional search. Therefore, there is no reason for refusing entry of the Amendment.

Summary

It is submitted that the references cited by the Examiner, taken individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1-13 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

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If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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